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### **When Prophecy Becomes a Reality**

*How the belief in the imminent return of Jesus influenced the Assemblies of God, USA's  
perception of the world during 1914-1919*

Marianne van der Klis

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S4718984

First Supervisor: Dr. Manoela Carpenedo

Second assessor: Dr. Gorazd Andrejč

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## Abstract

In this thesis, the *Pentecostal Evangel* will be analysed from 1914 to 1919. This is the official magazine of the Assemblies of God, USA. Specifically, their view on World War I and the emerging modern Zionist movement and how that relates to the Second Coming of Christ will be discussed. This thesis will describe how the Assemblies see the relationship between what is happening in the world and their religious ideals. They see both the war and the developments towards the establishment of an independent Jewish state as signs that Jesus will return soon. Throughout this period, they are balancing their criticism of the American government's role in World War I with not being perceived as being disloyal to the government. They do not think the U.S. will be excluded from any punishments God will give to the nation, and it also has no special role to play in the establishment of a Jewish state. This is different from what other American protestants thought during the time. The main focus in the *Pentecostal Evangel* is pointing out the signs that Jesus is returning soon, calling all of their readers to be ready.

**Key terms:** Assemblies of God, USA, Eschatology, Pentecostalism, World War I, Christian Zionism, Dispensationalism

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## Chapter One: Introduction

By means of this war God is preparing for the Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. [...] He is punishing the nations for their iniquities just as He always does and did in the olden times [...] The war is materially affecting the political situation of the Jews, and probably will set them free for their own land, which in some way MUST be theirs, for God has sworn to give it to them.<sup>1</sup>

This was written on April 10th 1917, four days after the United States joined the fighting of World War I, which had been going on for three years at that point. It was published in *The Weekly Evangel*, the magazine that would later become *The Pentecostal Evangel*. This is the official magazine of the Assemblies of God, USA (AG). The war is identified as a sign that the Second Coming of Jesus is near, and a link is made to the creation of a state for the Jews. This thesis will showcase that these connections between religious and political beliefs are consistently made by the Assemblies.

AG is a Pentecostal denomination established in 1914, a few months before World War I broke out. Over a hundred years later, they are more successful than ever and have millions of members worldwide<sup>2</sup>. Despite this, there has not been a lot of research regarding the relationship between their religious and political views. Especially on the topic of the Christian Zionist narratives that protrude in these years. These narratives, however, cannot be separated from the larger political discussion at the time surrounding World War I. As will be discussed, the Assemblies wanted to uphold pacifistic values and were at times critical of the role of the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard Newby, 'The Great War and the Speedy Return of Our Lord', *The Weekly Evangel*, 10 April 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170410-01.1.1&e=-----en-20-1-img-txIN----->.

<sup>2</sup> 'Home | Assemblies of God (USA)', accessed 28 April 2025, <https://ag.org/Home>.

government. This was controversial due to certain laws that made obstructing the war effort illegal, and thus, they also emphasised their loyalty to the American government.

In this thesis, the main question that will be answered is: how has the belief in the imminent return of Jesus of the Assemblies of God, USA shaped their perception of the political reality between 1914 and 1919? Specifically, how the Assemblies of God viewed World War I and American participation in the war, as well as the emerging modern Christian Zionist movement. To get to this answer, several sub-questions first need to be answered:

- What are the eschatological beliefs of the Assemblies of God, USA?
- How did they describe World War I and American participation in the war?
- How did they discuss the goals of the creation of an independent Jewish state?

To discover this, the Assemblies' official magazine will be used, *The Pentecostal Evangel*. This will not represent every belief held within the Assemblies of God, but will indicate the general discourse. First, some historical context is given about the founding of the Assemblies of God, *The Pentecostal Evangel*, as well as an explanation of their end-time beliefs. Furthermore, a brief explanation is given of Christian Zionism, its different forms, history and important proponents. Afterwards, the research question and its relevance will be discussed more in depth, together with some of the existing academic discussions. Continuing, the methodology for this thesis will be explained, leading to the analysis of the sources. The analysis and discussion are split into two parts, the first focusing on World War I and the role of the U.S., the second focusing on the Zionist narratives.

AG perceived the war and the emerging modern Zionist movement as a sign that God was returning soon. Their pacifist ideals were challenged by the reality of military conscription.

However, different from what some researchers have stated about American protestants<sup>3</sup>, they were critical of the involvement of the U.S. government in the war. They did not see a special role laid out for America in what was happening in the world.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert O. Smith, *More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (Oxford University Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199993246.001.0001>.

## Chapter Two: Research Background

### Literature review

#### History of the Assemblies of God, USA

To understand the end time beliefs of the Assemblies of God, USA during 1914 and 1919, it is important to understand how and by whom AG was founded. A group of Pentecostal ministers came together in Arkansas in 1914<sup>4</sup>. They had previously been loosely connected under the Church of God in Christ and the Apostolic Faith Movement, but wanted to strengthen their ties. This is how they founded the Assemblies of God. They had all been inspired by the Azusa Street Revivals<sup>5</sup>. The Azusa Street Revivals took place a couple of years before, between 1906 and 1909, in a church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles. They were a series of services which continued for hours. People were speaking in tongues and experiencing divine healings. They attracted many different people from all walks of life. These revivals are seen as the birthplace of Pentecostalism in the USA and inspired many people to establish their own Pentecostal congregations<sup>6</sup>.

Pentecostalism is a movement within Christianity. There are many varieties of Pentecostalism; therefore, it is difficult to give a tradition which would include everyone who identifies as Pentecostal<sup>7</sup>. Early Pentecostalism grew from a longer tradition of evangelicalism, reaffirming the fourfold Gospel<sup>8</sup>. A set of beliefs that consists of salvation, healing, baptism with

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<sup>4</sup> Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), <http://archive.org/details/restoringfaithas0000blum>.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret M. Poloma and John C. Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism* (New York University Press, 2010), <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.18574/nyu/9780814767832.001.0001/html>.

<sup>6</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*.

<sup>7</sup> Cecil M. Robeck and Amos Yong, 'Global Pentecostalism: An Introduction to an Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Amos Yong and Jr Robeck Cecil M., Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9780511910111.002>.

<sup>8</sup> Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God*.

the Holy Spirit and the soon return of Jesus to earth. Baptism with the Holy Spirit would bring gifts to those baptised, such as being able to speak in tongues and performing divine healings. This was seen in the Azusa Street Revivals. The fourfold gospel is reflected in the main beliefs of the Assemblies of God, with the baptism in the Holy Spirit at the centre<sup>9</sup>. This is also what distinguishes it from the broader umbrella of evangelicalism.

In 1914, the first General Council of the Assemblies of God was held. There, they established their name and identity. Eudorus N. Bell was appointed as chair, Joseph Roswell Flower was named secretary. Although they officially had at least a vague shared theology, in practice this differed. For example, about whether or not women should be allowed to lead a service. Officially, it was not allowed, but in practice it frequently happened<sup>10</sup>. This was the way in the early years and still is the case today. Due to the way the AG is structured as a denomination, local congregations hold a lot of power. They can appoint their own pastors, for example<sup>11</sup>. Today, the Assemblies of God, USA is a part of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, a loose coalition of national fellowships. There are 450,000 churches worldwide with over 86 million members, of which nearly 3 million live in the United States<sup>12</sup>. They are especially successful in the global south. The country in which the Assemblies of God has the most adherents is Brazil, with reportedly around 13 million members in 2013<sup>13</sup>.

In this thesis, *The Pentecostal Evangel* will be analysed throughout 1914 and 1919 on its content on the Second Coming of Christ and how that relates to the political climate of the time.

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<sup>9</sup> Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God*.

<sup>10</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*.

<sup>11</sup> Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God*.

<sup>12</sup> 'Home | Assemblies of God (USA)', accessed 28 April 2025, <https://ag.org/Home>.

<sup>13</sup> Do G1 DF, 'José Wellington é reeleito presidente da Assembleia de Deus', Distrito Federal, 11 April 2013, <https://g1.globo.com/distrito-federal/noticia/2013/04/jose-wellington-e-reeleito-presidente-da-assembleia-de-deus.html>.

*The Christian Evangel*, *The Weekly Evangel* and *The Pentecostal Evangel* are all names for the same magazine. It was initially published by J. Roswell Flower and his wife Alice Flower starting in July 1913 under the first name<sup>14</sup>. With the establishment of the Assemblies of God, USA in 1914, *The Christian Evangel* became one of the official magazines<sup>15</sup>. Eventually, in 1919, after several name changes, *The Christian Evangel* became *The Pentecostal Evangel*, which remained more or less the same up till 2014 when it ceased publication<sup>16</sup>. In this thesis, the name of *The Pentecostal Evangel* will be used for the sake of consistency since it is the name the magazine has used for the largest number of years.

The normal editions of the magazine were published on Saturdays, had 16 pages, and usually opened with a piece written by the editor. Over the following pages, there are several pieces, usually sent in by people within the congregation, covering Christian morals for the readers. There was usually one longer piece written in the style of a sermon. Every week, there is also a column in which a preacher answers questions sent. During this period, E.N. Bell was the preacher in question. Following that, a verse was given for each day of the week to think about. The magazine also included a Sunday school lesson and stories by missionaries in the U.S. as well as around the world. They also usually include some advertisements for books and tracts sold by the Gospel Publishing House. The cost of one magazine was 2 cents, a subscription for a year was 1 dollar<sup>17</sup>. The editorial board aimed to keep *The Pentecostal Evangel* as affordable as possible, even if this meant losing money. In May of 1915, they reported having over 4000 subscriptions, reaching

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Pentecostal Evangel’, accessed 30 April 2025, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=PEV&ai=1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>15</sup> J.R. Flower, ‘Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1914’ (General Council of the Assemblies of God, Hot Springs, Arkansas: The Gospel Publishing House, 1914), <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=GCMC191404-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Pentecostal Evangel’.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Important Notice’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 30 March 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19180330-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

around 15.000 people each week<sup>18</sup>. All editions of *The Pentecostal Evangel* can be accessed online through the website of the Consortium of Pentecostal Archives. This collaborative archive was set up in 2011 for Pentecostal archives to make their materials easily accessible to anyone interested, free of cost<sup>19</sup>. It is financially supported by the member churches and has an executive committee with representatives of these different congregations. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center is the contributing archive on behalf of AG.

### **Eschatological beliefs of the Assemblies of God, USA**

Eschatological beliefs are beliefs about how the world will end<sup>20</sup>. The eschatological beliefs of the Assemblies of God, USA are based on their interpretation of the bible. Part of their fundamental truths is that the Second Coming of Jesus, as described in the book of Revelation, is happening soon<sup>21</sup>. However, how soon, soon is, is unclear. The belief in the imminent return of Christ was part of the fundamental truths in 1916 and still is today<sup>22</sup>. To understand how these beliefs relate to their political ideology, it is important to first understand these ideas.

They are a premillennial denomination, which means that they believe that Jesus will return before the establishment of his thousand-year reign on earth<sup>23</sup>. They are also a dispensational denomination. Christian dispensationalism is a way of thinking about the history of the world

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Only Fifty Cents For the Balance of the Year’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 1 May 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150501-01.1.4&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>19</sup> ‘About the Consortium of Pentecostal Archives’, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, accessed 1 May 2025, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=p&p=about&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>20</sup> Catherine Wessinger, ‘Millennial Glossary’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford University Press, 2011), 0, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195301052.003.0036>.

<sup>21</sup> Stanley Frodsham, ‘Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1916’ (General Council of the Assemblies of God, St. Louis, Missouri: The Gospel Publishing House, 1916), <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=GCMC1916-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>22</sup> Wave Nunnally, ‘The Imminent Return of Christ: Do We Really Believe It?’, *Enrichment*, 2009, [https://cdn1.acdn.io/sites/agorg/coredoctrines/secondcoming/Do\\_We\\_Really\\_Believe.pdf](https://cdn1.acdn.io/sites/agorg/coredoctrines/secondcoming/Do_We_Really_Believe.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Wessinger, ‘Millennial Glossary’.

which can be found amongst premillennialist denominations<sup>24</sup>. The history of the world is separated into certain periods, or dispensations, of which there are a set number with a predetermined end. When all the different dispensations have taken place, it will be the end of the world as we know it. Cyrus Scofield published the first version of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909<sup>25</sup>. This bible was heavily promoted by the Gospel Publishing House<sup>26</sup>. He identifies seven distinct ages, as described by Sydney Ahlstrom, marked by God's different covenants. These are innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the fullness of time<sup>27</sup>. The age of grace started with Jesus's crucifixion and will end with the Second Coming of Jesus. These ages are a combination of the popular teachings of the era, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century<sup>28</sup>. Such as John Nelson Darby's who also divided the history of the world into seven dispensations and believed the return of Jesus was imminent<sup>29</sup>.

In dispensational teaching, these seven ages are combined with the idea of the Seventy Weeks. The Seventy Weeks come from Daniel 9:24-27 (NKJV), and each day of the seventy weeks is, in dispensational teachings, a year<sup>30</sup>. The time it took from this prophecy to be given to the crucifixion of Jesus is exactly sixty-nine weeks in the dispensational calculations. The seventieth week refers to the years of the Great Tribulation. During the Great Tribulation, many horrific things will happen, but after it is done, Jesus will return. However, this final week is yet to happen

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<sup>24</sup> Glenn W. Shuck, 'Christian Dispensationalism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford University Press, 2011), 0, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195301052.003.0026>.

<sup>25</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 810, <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=52869&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel D. Isgrigg, *Aspects of Assemblies of God Origins: Exploring Narratives, Theologies, and Issues from the Early Years* (Eugene, UNITED STATES: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2024), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=31920917>.

<sup>27</sup> Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*.

<sup>28</sup> Isgrigg, *Aspects of Assemblies of God Origins*.

<sup>29</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*.

<sup>30</sup> Shuck, 'Christian Dispensationalism'.

as the stopwatch is paused during what is called the “Great Parenthesis”. This is also sometimes called the Church Age or the Times of the Gentiles, when God is building up the church amongst the Gentiles (non-Jews). One can know that the end of the Church Age is near due to certain signs. These signs are, for example, wars, famines and national disasters<sup>31</sup>.

There is a lot of variety in the specific dispensational positions within AG during this period<sup>32</sup>. The Statement of Fundamental Truths, established in 1916, allowed for this variety. Daniel Isgrigg describes two main approaches to eschatological beliefs: pneumatological, meaning based on the Holy Spirit, and sign-based, which relates historical facts to the soon return of Jesus. Although they are closely related to each other, the pneumatological approach focuses more on interpreting what the bible said about the rapture. The sign-based approach, as its name suggests, looked more at what was happening in the world and how that corresponds with what the scripture describes. For this thesis, there will mostly be examples of the sign-based approach as it connects what was happening in the world to what was described in scripture.

## **Christian Zionism**

To be able to understand how the eschatological beliefs of the Assemblies of God are related to the Christian Zionist movement in the early twentieth century, it is important to establish what Christian Zionism is. There are various reasons for Christians to support the establishment of a Jewish nation, which is what Zionism is. Anne Perez identifies four main types of Christian Zionism: dispensationalist, biblical, humanitarian and political<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Isgrigg, *Aspects of Assemblies of God Origins*.

<sup>32</sup> Isgrigg, *Aspects of Assemblies of God Origins*.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Perez, ‘Christian Zionism’, in *Understanding Zionism, History and Perspectives* (Augsburg Fortress, 2023), 111, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2xkjxf4.8>.

In dispensationalist Christian Zionism, the belief is that before Jesus returns to earth, there needs to be a Jewish state in the area we know as Israel/Palestine. This is because the area is an important podium for the last days. Christ will rule from Jerusalem during his millennial reign and the battle of Armageddon will take place at Har Megiddo. This type of Christian Zionism has been frequently criticised for being antisemitic. For example, because Jews and Israel are used as a means to an end, and not always a happy end<sup>34</sup>. This type is the one that most people think of when it comes to Christian Zionism and also the one that is most relevant for this thesis. As it is the type of Zionism that *The Pentecostal Evangel* promotes.

It is, however, important to highlight that this is not the only type of Christian Zionism. The term Christian Zionism finds its origins in the late 19th century, with the origins of the modern Zionist movement and Theodor Herzl<sup>35</sup>. Although the ideology is much older, it eventually morphed into the political movement that can be seen today. An important figure for Christian Zionism in the U.S. is William E. Blackstone, who is the founder of what is now called Life In Messiah International. This is an organisation focused on spreading the gospel among Jewish people. He argued that American Christians should actively work on not only converting Jews but also helping them return to Palestine. Which he did himself throughout his entire life. In the United Kingdom, Zionists convinced the government that they needed to voice their support for the Zionist cause. Despite a large number of British Jews themselves not being Zionists, the British government did not know this and was convinced of the necessity of a Jewish state. This led to the Balfour Declaration in November of 1917. This declaration and the following invasion of the British into Jerusalem in December of the same year were seen as signs by dispensationalists.

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<sup>34</sup> Perez, ‘Christian Zionism’, 118.

<sup>35</sup> Donald M. Lewis, *A Short History of Christian Zionism: From the Reformation to the Twenty-First Century* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2021).

Scofield himself called it the first real prophetic sign<sup>36</sup>. Premillennialists already had identified the war as a sign that the end time was near, but this further proved their theory. Christian support for the Zionist cause was at a high. It has remained that way to this day, as the biggest Israel lobby group in the United States is Christians United for Israel<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Donald M. Lewis, *A Short History of Christian Zionism*, 190.

<sup>37</sup> Donald M. Lewis, *A Short History of Christian Zionism*, 282.

## Research question

This research is focusing on the early years of the Assemblies of God, USA and how their belief in the imminent return of Jesus shaped their political beliefs. Specifically, on the ongoing war and the emerging Christian Zionist movement. Previously, the historical context behind the establishment of the Assemblies was discussed as well as their eschatological beliefs. A brief introduction was also given to Christian Zionism and specifically dispensational Christian Zionism. Academic research on these topics has been done in the past, but they have never been brought together in relation to the Assemblies of God.

There has been some research on AG and their position in World War I. For example, by Edith Blumhofer, Howard Kenyon and Daniel Isgrigg. They all discuss the pacifist beliefs of the Assemblies during World War I and how these shifted during the period of the war. They also use *The Pentecostal Evangel* as their main primary source. Blumhofer discussed the position of the Assemblies in the light of ‘citizenship’<sup>38</sup>. The Assemblies view themselves primarily as citizens of a heavenly kingdom, but in the war, this clashes with their earthly citizenship to the United States of America. Kenyon goes further in arguing a relationship between the shift in tone and the passing of the Espionage and Sedition Acts in 1917 and 1918, respectively<sup>39</sup>.

However, in these discussions on the political beliefs of the Assemblies, there is rarely any attention for the Zionist narratives that persist. The existence of Christian Zionism as a political ideology in this community needs to be more explicitly discussed. Since this is a powerful political community whose philosophy has had a lot of impact on the global stage. Important to mention is

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<sup>38</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*.

<sup>39</sup> Howard Nelson Kenyon, *Ethics in the Age of the Spirit : Race, Women, War, and the Assemblies of God*, 1 online resource (xv, 357 pages) vols, Pentecostals, Peacemaking, and Social Justice Series; 11; v.11 (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2019), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2577703>.

that Kenyon and Isgrigg are members of the Assemblies themselves<sup>40, 41</sup>. This shows that there is not a lot of research being done on the Assemblies of God outside of the community itself. Which is something this thesis is helping to change.

This research discusses a Pentecostal denomination a century ago, one which had just been founded but would grow to have millions of members<sup>42</sup>. In general, it has been said that Pentecostalism is one of the fastest-growing religious groups in the world<sup>43</sup>. Evangelicals, which is the umbrella under which Pentecostalism falls, are an important voter base in the United States today<sup>44</sup>. Researching its origins and the relationship between their early religious and political beliefs could help understand this large community better. Just a few months after their official establishment, World War I would break out. A war that would cause many Pentecostals to think the end is near<sup>45</sup>. One that would challenge their ideals as the United States joined the fighting. Around the same time, support for the Zionist cause is rising. All of this has been prophesied in the bible according to this community. How have the Assemblies of God dealt with what was happening around them? How did they position themselves between what they believed to be an event prophesied in the bible, as well as a national crisis? That is what this thesis aims to find out. First, by discussing how *The Pentecostal Evangel* discussed the war and how they interpreted the role the United States played. Afterwards, this thesis will discuss how the magazine talks about establishing a Jewish nation state. Showcasing how these are both intrinsically connected to their belief that the return of Christ is imminent. Specifically, between the years 1914 and 1919, a lot

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<sup>40</sup> Howard Kenyon, 'About Your Guide', Howard Kenyon, accessed 21 May 2025, <https://howardkenyon.com/about-me/>.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel Isgrigg, 'About Me', Daniel D. Isgrigg, accessed 21 May 2025, <https://danielisgrigg.com/page/2/>.

<sup>42</sup> 'Home | Assemblies of God (USA)'.

<sup>43</sup> David Martin, *Pentecostalism : The World Their Parish, Religion and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Frances FitzGerald, *The Evangelicals : The Struggle to Shape America*, First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

<sup>45</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*.

happened in the world that would impact how the Pentecostals were interacting with the world around them. Focusing on the years during which the active fighting was happening as well as the year of peace negotiations, helps to understand the impact of the war on their religious beliefs, as well as a brief insight into how the Assemblies continued after the war ended.

## Methodology

Establishing whether or not there is a relationship between the belief that Jesus's return is imminent and the political beliefs of the Assemblies of God, USA between 1914 and 1919 requires a few steps. Previously, some historic context of the Assemblies, as well as some of the most important theories, have been discussed. As well as the history of *The Pentecostal Evangel* and the archive where it can be found. These weekly magazines will form my primary sources. Of course, these are not fully representative of all the beliefs held in the Assemblies of God, USA during this time. They mostly reflect the editorial board's opinion. The Assemblies have a shared Statement of Fundamental Truths, but these were established in 1916, midst the period this thesis is researching<sup>46</sup>. Thus, there was no shared theology, even the Fundamental Truths are deliberately vague to give agency to the individual congregations who are part of the Assemblies. They did have General Councils every year where members could vote on resolutions; however, these were usually broad. To say, what the paper says about the beliefs of the Assemblies of God, USA can not be extrapolated to mean that every individual who was a member during this period believed exactly these things.

However, this magazine does provide some insight into the general beliefs held. Presumably, if they were too disagreeable or controversial, they would be more hesitant about

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<sup>46</sup> Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God*

publishing these for anyone to read. Or they would have included more corrections, as they did from time to time<sup>47</sup>. While reading these papers, the focus lay on the pieces that explicitly or implicitly discussed the topic of this thesis. Within the texts, I was looking for the patterns and understanding the direction the denomination has taken over time. I used both inductive and deductive codes to help me recognise these, which in the long term also helped organise my notes on each magazine. These could have either been related to their eschatological ideas or if they made any references to the political situation. For example, if they mentioned the ongoing war or developments on the creation of an independent Jewish nation.

Whilst analysing these magazines, I will be engaging in critical discourse analysis. It focuses on power and ideology in discourse as well as the social reality outside the discourse<sup>48</sup>. Knowing the social and political context in which these magazines were written is vital to understanding why certain things were written and certain times. Which will help answer the larger question this thesis is posing. However, one of the limitations of this method is that it is difficult to claim the why behind what was written. Although the social and political context might provide a theory as to why something was written, it cannot be stated for certain unless it has been written down. Another limitation is that the magazines do not reveal what people did with what was written there.

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<sup>47</sup> For example in the edition of the 5th of February 1916, to a piece by Walter J. Mortlock or on the 25th of August 1917 on the specifics of a story received about a prophecy. They also discussed the criticism their Second Coming Number received on the General Council in the edition of the 29th of September 1917, clarifying that it was merely a suggestion that Jesus would return in September (the Special Second Number edition was first published in April of that year)

<sup>48</sup> Titus Hjelm, ‘Discourse Analysis’, in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2021).

## Chapter Three: Analysis and Discussion

### View on World War I

#### World War I as a sign of the Second Coming

On June 28th 1914, Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo<sup>49</sup>. It was the straw that broke the camel's back, causing the start of the First World War a month later. Fighting spread across the European continent and beyond. The war was fought between the Central Powers, notably Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire and the Allied Powers, notably France, the United Kingdom and Russia. The United States joined the war effort on the side of the Allies in April of 1917. Primarily because Germany continuously bombed American ships, despite their neutrality. Although prior to officially joining, the United States did lend money to the Allies, as well as sell them weapons. The fighting stopped with the ceasefire on November 11th 1918, and the official declaration of peace was signed in Versailles on the 28th of June 1919. Exactly five years after the assassination that started the war.

So, how did the Assemblies of God feel about this war? The first mention *The Pentecostal Evangel* makes of the war is on the 8th of August 1914, around a week after the first declarations of war. The title of this piece is “Rumors of Wars”<sup>50</sup>, a reference to Matthew 24:6 (NIV). In this bible chapter, the disciples ask Jesus for signs of his second coming and the end of the ages. Jesus mentions wars and rumours of wars as one of those, as well as earthquakes and famines. In the article in the magazine, they mention that this war could be one of these signs<sup>51</sup>. They also refer to the prophecy shown to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:41-44, which is about a statue that is made of

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<sup>49</sup> Dennis E Showalter, John Graham Royde-Smith, and The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘World War I’, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 7 May 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I>.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Roswell Flower, ‘Rumors of Wars’, *The Christian Evangel*, 8 August 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19140808-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>51</sup> Gospel Publishing House, ‘Rumors of Wars’.

different components, each referring to a different kingdom<sup>52</sup>. The final component from the legs down is iron with clay mixed. They understand this to be about the Roman Empire, which will need to split into ten different kingdoms (as the toes of the statue). Joseph Roswell Flower, author of this article, says that during the Balkan War this prerequisite for the Second Coming was almost fulfilled. He finishes the article by saying:

We are watching every development of the crisis in Europe with the greatest of interest, with our newspapers in one hand and the Bible in the other, checking off each prophecy as it is being fulfilled, knowing of a surety that the coming of the Lord cannot be long delayed.<sup>53</sup>

This tone is continued on the front page of next week's edition with the subtitle "The Nations of Europe Battle and Unconsciously Prepare the Way for the Return of the Lord Jesus to Establish His Kingdom Upon Earth"<sup>54</sup>. Thus, immediately, the war is understood in the light of biblical prophecies. However, it should be made clear that they did not think of this war as the Battle of Armageddon or the actual end of the world<sup>55</sup>. The rapture needs to still take place as well as the appearance of the Antichrist before the Battle of Armageddon<sup>56</sup>. The Antichrist is a false prophet

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<sup>52</sup> In a later edition, an article is included from Dr. Scofield which explains their vision on Nebuchadnezzar's dream more extensively. The golden head being Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, the silver chest being Medio-Persia, the Bronze belly being Alexander the Great's Greece and the Iron legs and feet being the Roman empire. The clay the iron got mixed with is explained as the popular will. The empire being split into two legs is the Western and Eastern Roman Empires, what still needs to happen is the splitting into ten toes, meaning ten different empires. When this happens, Jesus will destroy all of them as he comes back.

Source: Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, 'The War in the Light of Prophecy', *The Weekly Evangel*, 28 October 1916, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19161028-01.1.1&e=-----en-20-1-img-txIN----->.

<sup>53</sup> Flower, 'Rumors of Wars'.

<sup>54</sup> 'War! War!! War!!!', *The Christian Evangel*, 15 August 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19140815-01.1.1&e=-----en-20-1-img-txIN----->.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph Roswell Flower, 'Prophetic War Horses Sent Out', *The Christian Evangel*, 29 August 1914, The Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19140829-01.1.1&e=-----en-20-1-img-txIN----->.

<sup>56</sup> The Bridegrooms Messenger, 'Further Signs of the Last Days', *The Weekly Evangel*, 10 April 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150410-01.1.1&e=-----en-20-1-img-txIN----->.

who will mislead many people before Jesus defeats him<sup>57</sup>. Jesus also returns before his thousand-year peace reign, which will happen before the end of the world. The current war in their eyes is ‘just’ a sign that the end is near, not that it is happening. Which is part of dispensational teaching, the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy that is yet to happen will be preceded by certain signs<sup>58</sup>. One of these signs is war, and rumours of war. It is also an example of Isgrigg’s sign-based approach to prophecy<sup>59</sup>. The Assemblies are looking at what is happening around them in terms of it being a sign for biblical prophecies coming true.

The fact that the war is a sign that the end is near is something they remain convinced of throughout the entire course of the war. For example, in July 1916, an article was included which opens with the previously mentioned Matthew verse (Matt. 24:6–8 (NIV))<sup>60</sup>. After which it is said: “[t]he prophetic period to which the words of the above passage refer has now arrived.” The full article was also sold as a tract, meaning it was intended to be spread amongst as many people as possible.

This belief in the imminent Second Coming culminates in 1917 with a special edition about the topic. The *Evangel* released special editions before, about the missionary work they do in June of 1916<sup>61</sup> and one about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in February of 1917<sup>62</sup>. In March of 1917, they announced that they would publish a special Second Coming edition<sup>63</sup>. Differently from the previous special editions that were released on a Saturday instead of a normal edition of *The*

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<sup>57</sup> Wessinger, ‘Millennial Glossary’.

<sup>58</sup> Shuck, ‘Christian Dispensationalism’.

<sup>59</sup> Isgrigg, *Aspects of Assemblies of God Origins*.

<sup>60</sup> Leonard Newby, ‘Light on the Present Crisis’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 1 July 1916, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19160701-01.1.6&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Special Missionary Number’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 17 June 1916, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19160617-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Special Pentecostal Number’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 24 February 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170224-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Big Orders for Special Pentecostal Number’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 10 March 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170310-01.1.8&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

*Pentecostal Evangel*, this one was released on the 10th of April, a Tuesday. Four days after the United States declared war on Germany and officially joined the Great War. Although they do not explicitly state it, it would make sense that the special edition was published as a direct response. This further established the fact that the war was seen and interpreted in light of the Second Coming. The front page opens with a reference to the same Matthew verse as in August of 1914, mentioning wars and rumours of wars. The author of this article claims that this time has now come, and answers some common questions about the war<sup>64</sup>. He says: “by means of this war God is preparing for the Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”. In another article, the question is explored about whether or not Jesus will return in September of 1917<sup>65</sup>. As proof, they present a prophecy from a woman in Great Britain who received this vision ten years prior. Another woman in America confirmed this with a vision she received that the year the Lord would return is 1917. The edition of the 14th of April included an advertisement for this special edition, urging people to buy as many as possible, to spread this important message<sup>66</sup>.

However, this special edition was met with some criticism during the General Council of September, 1917<sup>67</sup>. It was not made clear enough in the edition that the return of the Lord in September was not a certainty. A resolution was adopted which made it clear that the denomination was against setting a date for the Second Coming of Jesus. The editors discussed this criticism and explained that it was not their intention with the edition to do so in the magazine following the

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<sup>64</sup> Newby, ‘The Great War and the Speedy Return of Our Lord’.

<sup>65</sup> ‘When Shall We Rise to Meet The Lord’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 10 April 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170410-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>66</sup> ‘The Second Coming Number’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 14 April 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170414-01.1.8&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>67</sup> Bartlett Peterson, ‘Assemblies of God General Council Minutes 1917’, in *General Council of the Assemblies of God* (St. Louis, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1917), <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=GCMC1917-01.1.2&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

General Council<sup>68</sup>. This did not stop them in the future from including pieces discussing calculations about when Jesus would return. Just two weeks later, a piece from Albert Norton was included, which discusses how important the year 1917 has been for the prophecies<sup>69</sup>. He says:

Already we have seen enough of what the great war, begun in 1914, has led to in disintegrating the Gentile nations, so that we need no argument to show that in this year of 1917 a great crisis is on all the nations of the earth. [...] This all goes to confirm us in the conviction that God's servants, who have made much of the reading and study of Daniel and the other Old Testament prophets, and of the book of Revelation and other New Testament prophecies, have made no mistake, and have thereby entered into a deeper fellowship with our Lord and the prophets, by giving this earnest heed to His Word.<sup>70</sup>

This is reiterated in the last edition of 1917, where some of the prophecies that came true this year are mentioned<sup>71</sup>. One of these is the United States joining the war. The author mentions that one can confidently expect the start of a new dispensation soon because the signs point to this dispensation ending. Similar pieces were included in the magazine over the final year of the war, such as in April of 1918. Where it is claimed that we are at the end of this Age, and the Great War and the famines that it is causing are part of those signs<sup>72</sup>. The war is consistently described as a sign of the end of this dispensation.

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<sup>68</sup> 'The Second Coming Number of The Evangel.', *The Weekly Evangel*, 29 September 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170929-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>69</sup> Albert Norton, 'The Year 1917 in Prophecy', *The Weekly Evangel*, 13 October 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19171013-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>70</sup> Norton, 'The Year 1917 in Prophecy', 4.

<sup>71</sup> A.W.F., '1917.', *The Weekly Evangel*, 22 December 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19171222-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>72</sup> Ernest A. Paul, 'The Great War.', *The Weekly Evangel*, 6 April 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19180406-01.1.5&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

## The position of the United States within World War I

As the war is a sign of the Second Coming being close to the Assemblies of God, the following step is to discuss how they saw the position of the American government within this war. Already in October of 1914, *The Pentecostal Evangel* shared an article in which a prophecy is shared that the United States will join the war<sup>73</sup>. Based on a vision allegedly received by George Washington in 1777. The editors question whether or not this vision was actually received by Washington, but acknowledge that regardless of this, the prophecy is coming true as they speak<sup>74</sup>.

In December of 1914, the magazine features a longer article about whether or not the war is justifiable<sup>75</sup>. In this article, Germany is portrayed as a bully against which the European nations have the right to defend themselves. They should protect weaker nations from German aggression. However, the Allies are not innocent.

Of this I am absolutely convinced, that God is with the Allies in this awful war, and though by means of it He is disciplining us all, Belgium for her Congo atrocities; Russia for her anti-Judaism; France for her infidelity; and Britain for her pleasure-loving, sabbath-breaking, and intemperance[.]<sup>76</sup>

This was not the philosophy of all Pentecostals, as is made clear by Burt McCafferty in an article where he responds to this one<sup>77</sup>. He argues that Christians should not fight and be pacifists.

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<sup>73</sup> Wesley Bradshaw, 'The Destiny of Our Nation', *The Christian Evangel*, 10 October 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19141010-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Roswell Flower, 'Editorials', *The Christian Evangel*, 10 October 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19141010-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>75</sup> 'Is European War Justifiable?', *The Christian Evangel*, 12 December 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19141212-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>76</sup> 'Is European War Justifiable?', 3.

<sup>77</sup> Burt McCafferty, 'Should Christians Go to War?', *The Christian Evangel*, 16 January 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150116-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

Burt McCafferty is one of the prominent voices in this discussion within the Assemblies of God. Another is Frank Bartleman. He wrote three articles for *The Pentecostal Evangel* in the summer of 1915, with the third being the most controversial, leading to it being denounced a week later<sup>78</sup>. In the first article, he says that all the countries are being punished, including the United States<sup>79</sup>. Bartleman argues that America is ruled by the gods of money. The Lusitania, a large American passenger ship, was destroyed by the Germans before the U.S. officially joined the war, a few months before this article. However, this ship was also carrying ammunition and arms for the Allies. It being sunk, Bartleman argues, is part of the judgment of God for America. In the second article in July, he argues something similar<sup>80</sup>. Bartleman claims that all nations are responsible for this war and will be punished by God for it. The third article in August also follows these principles<sup>81</sup>. Here, he once again mentions the sins of the United States. Bartleman says that the current American wealth has been earned with the sale of weapons and taking land from the indigenous population, which God will punish them for. Therefore, they should repent. He also says that the American media is controlled by the English and is spreading false anti-German propaganda. This latter statement was too controversial and was deemed German propaganda<sup>82</sup>. Therefore, the editors said that publishing it was a mistake. They say that “[w]e have no arguments about the war as we are only interested in it from a Christian standpoint and its effect on the coming

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<sup>78</sup> Joseph Roswell. Flower, ‘What Will the Harvest Be?’, *The Christian Evangel*, 14 August 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150814-01.1.2&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>79</sup> Frank Bartleman, ‘Present Day Conditions’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 5 June 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150605-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>80</sup> Frank Bartleman, ‘The European War’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 10 July 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150710-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>81</sup> Frank Bartleman, ‘What Will the Harvest Be?’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 7 August 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150807-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>82</sup> Flower, ‘What Will the Harvest Be?’

of the lord.’<sup>83</sup> However, they do not denounce the earlier articles, which also shared criticisms of the American government.

Blumhofer understands the debate surrounding pacifism and nationalism in terms of ‘citizenship’; members of the Assemblies feel like they are citizens of a heavenly kingdom<sup>84</sup>. Not citizens of a worldly nation such as the United States. This can be seen in the words of Stanley Frodsham in September of 1915<sup>85</sup>.

The school children of every nation are nurtured in national pride from the day they begin to read their history books; but national pride, like every other form of pride is abomination in the sight of God. [...] It is important for the saint of God to realise that his citizenship is in heaven, and that here he has no continuing city.

When one does not feel national pride, criticism of the country they live in might be more acceptable. This open rejection of nationalism is notable, however. Robert Smith, in his work on American Christian Zionism, discusses the relationship between religious ideals and American exceptionalism<sup>86</sup>. American exceptionalism is the idea that the United States is a unique and superior country to others and therefore has an important role to play in history and politics<sup>87</sup>. Smith describes the history of how American Christians got intertwined with Zionism. William Blackstone was a key figure in this. Blackstone viewed the United States as having a unique role to play in God’s plan. That they were called upon to help create a Jewish nation in Palestine<sup>88</sup>. Blackstone’s ideas allowed American dispensationalists to combine their ideas of

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<sup>83</sup> Flower, ‘What Will the Harvest Be?’, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*.

<sup>85</sup> Stanley H. Frodsham, ‘Our Heavenly Citizenship’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 11 September 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150911-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN--->.

<sup>86</sup> Smith, *More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism*.

<sup>87</sup> Adam Volle, ‘American Exceptionalism’, Britannica Encyclopaedia, 19 May 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/American-exceptionalism>.

<sup>88</sup> Smith, *More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism*.

dispensationalism and American patriotism. The last dispensation was about to be ushered in and America had a special role to play in this, in allowing Jews to establish a state in Palestine. The Zionist aspect of this will be discussed later in this thesis. Although they did publish articles by Blackstone, the Assemblies of God did not feel this level of nationalism. As mentioned previously, they openly denounced the idea of national pride. America should not be seen as a ‘Christian nation’<sup>89</sup>. Florence L. Burpee repeats this sentiment in July 1916<sup>90</sup>. She openly condemns the fact that the government is selling weapons to any country willing to buy them. The *Pentecostal Evangel* was openly critical of the United States government, different from what Smith described happening with the idea of American exceptionalism and national pride that Blackstone was promoting.

The tone about the war shifts when the U.S. joins the fighting. The focus lies on the issue of military conscription, as this is what members are actively faced with. To the questions about whether or not a Christian should fight, E.N. Bell wrote in April 1917: “It is very difficult to live for God in the army [...] I would not join the army until compelled to do so”<sup>91</sup>. He does not say it is impossible to be a good Christian in the army, but does say it is incredibly difficult. This was not the last time this question was asked, and answers differed. Booth-Clibborn, for example, was a staunch advocate for pacifism<sup>92</sup>. In his article, he counters a few common arguments about why Christians do not have to be pacifistic. Christians have been preaching about love and peace, now it is time to practice what they preach. Thus, they should not fight in the war. The governing body

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<sup>89</sup> Newby, ‘The Great War and the Speedy Return of Our Lord’.

<sup>90</sup> Florence L. Burpee, ‘Watchman, What of the Night?’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 29 July 1916, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19160729-01.1.2&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>91</sup> E.N. Bell, ‘Questions and Answers’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 14 April 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170414-01.1.8&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>92</sup> S.H. Booth-Clibborn, ‘The Christian and War: Is It Too Late?’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 28 April 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170428-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

of the Assemblies of God also believed this<sup>93</sup>. Therefore, they wrote to the President himself, asking him to allow religious objectors to be exempted from military conscription. They were successful, as this was included in the grounds for exemptions. The article provides short instructions for those who want to object.

However, this should not be interpreted as the Assemblies being against the U.S. government, the Assemblies wanted that to be very clear. At the General Council in 1917, they accepted a resolution that stated that they were loyal to the U.S. government<sup>94</sup>. Conscientious objection to the conscription is still promoted, but it should be done properly, following the legal path for it<sup>95</sup>. They reaffirm this in the *Evangelical* at the beginning of 1918:

Therefore we, as a body of Christians, while *purposing* to fulfill all the obligations of loyal citizenship, are nevertheless constrained to declare we cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance which involves the actual destruction of human life[.]<sup>96</sup>

The first sentence being vital, they are pacifists but are loyal to the U.S. government. Later that same month, a question was sent in about whether or not good Christians can buy a Liberty Bond (a government bond that could be bought by the public, thereby supporting the government monetarily in its war effort<sup>97</sup>). E.N. Bell answers this affirmatively, equating it to buying a postage stamp, as that is also indirectly contributing to the war<sup>98</sup>. He elaborates on this by saying that

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<sup>93</sup> 'The Pentecostal Movement and the Conscription Law', *The Weekly Evangel*, 4 August 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170804-01.1.7&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>94</sup> Peterson, 'Assemblies of God General Council Minutes 1917'.

<sup>95</sup> E.N. Bell, 'Questions and Answers', *The Weekly Evangel*, 25 August 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170825-01.1.9&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>96</sup> 'The Pentecostal Movement and the Conscription Law', *The Weekly Evangel*, 5 January 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19180105-01.1.5&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>97</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'War Finance', Encyclopaedia Britannica, 24 March 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/money/war-finance#ref253269>.

<sup>98</sup> E.N. Bell, 'Questions and Answers', *The Weekly Evangel*, 26 January 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19180126-01.1.9&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

protecting the religious freedom that the United States of America has and not succumbing to the German Kaiser is a good thing. A month later, he writes a longer article, drawing a comparison to Jesus, who paid his taxes to the Roman Empire despite it also being a nation of war<sup>99</sup>. He asks the question: “[d]o we need to be more conscientious than Jesus was? Does God require a higher standard in us than He did in Jesus?”<sup>100</sup>. E.N. Bell repeatedly made it explicit that the Assemblies' loyalties lay not just with God but also with the American government.

This shift in tone from a more critical view on the American government to repeatedly making explicit that the Assemblies of God are loyal to the government is not without reason, Keynon argues. He says that this was due to the passing of the Espionage and Sedition Act in June of 1917 and May of 1918, respectively<sup>101</sup>. These acts deemed anyone who opposed the war a traitor and made it illegal to obstruct military enlistment. Advocating for people to be pacifists and not fight in the war could thus be interpreted as violating these acts. Keynon suggests the editors, specifically E.N. Bell, were careful about avoiding. The editors of the magazine never mention the change in tone or the law that has been passed. So it could be a coincidence, however, this seems unlikely if one looks at what was said after the fighting ended.

The end of the war did not mean that the Assemblies believed Jesus's return was not still imminent. The war was a sign that the end was nearing, and so was the establishment of the League of Nations<sup>102</sup>. Which could be a revival of the old Roman Empire, which meant that the ten kingdoms mentioned in Nebuchadnezzar's dream might appear soon. It was suggested in March of 1919 that the League of Nations might even be preparing the way for the Antichrist, who would

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<sup>99</sup> E.N. Bell, ‘A Tremendous Day Is To-Day’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 23 February 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19180223-01.1.6&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>100</sup> Bell, ‘A Tremendous Day Is To-Day’, 6.

<sup>101</sup> Kenyon, *Ethics in the Age of the Spirit : Race, Women, War, and the Assemblies of God*.

<sup>102</sup> E.N. Bell, ‘What Next?’, *The Christian Evangel*, 28 December 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19181228-01.1.4&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

rule over all these nations<sup>103</sup>. The Antichrist has an important role in dispensational eschatology. The Antichrist is the opposite of Christ, but during the Great Tribulation many will worship them instead of Christ<sup>104</sup>. The Antichrist will be an incredibly powerful figure, as well as having an important role in the timeline of the Second Coming of Christ. If the Antichrist appears, Jesus's return is very near. So seeing a position of power appear is something dispensationalists look out for as one of their signs. Bell wrote a longer article in which he explains that the Antichrist will be at the head of a federation between ten kingdoms. “No matter how many nations may now or hereafter join the League of Nations there will come a time when ten will be chiefly concerned and will soon complete the prophecy concerning the final drama before Jesus will come.”

This would not be the only time the League of Nations was discussed in relation to the Antichrist. A month later, a series of articles appeared written by J. Narver Gortner on the front page of the *Evangel*. He received a dream from God where he learned that the League of Nations would bring forth the Antichrist<sup>105</sup>. Not just that, the United States would support the Antichrist. He said: “[t]his means that back of the League of Nations, the World Federation, out of which shall come the Antichrist, will stand the United States, with its army and with its navy”<sup>106</sup>. This vision is further supported in the two following editions with bible texts<sup>107</sup> as well as the vision of another lady. She describes the American flag leading a group of flags out of which the Antichrist would appear<sup>108</sup>. The American government is part of the group of nations the Antichrist will lead.

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<sup>103</sup> E.N. Bell, ‘The League of Nations’, *The Christian Evangel*, 8 March 1919, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19190308-01.1.2&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>104</sup> Shuck, ‘Christian Dispensationalism’.

<sup>105</sup> J Narver Gortner, ‘Six Hundred Sixty and Six’, *The Christian Evangel*, 19 April 1919, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19190419-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>106</sup> Narver Gortner, ‘Six Hundred Sixty and Six’, 2.

<sup>107</sup> J Narver Gortner, ‘Six Hundred Sixty and Six’, *The Christian Evangel*, 3 May 1919, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19190503-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>108</sup> J Narver Gortner, ‘Six Hundred Sixty and Six’, *The Christian Evangel*, 17 May 1919, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19190517-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

These dreams once again challenge the idea of American exceptionalism. The United States will be part of the League of Nations, whose leader the Assemblies view as the potential Antichrist. In this view, the United States has a special role but not a positive one. Different from what Robert Smith describes among other American premillennialists at the time<sup>109</sup>. William Blackstone, although he acknowledged that the U.S. was not a perfect nation, emphasised America as God's chosen nation. Comparing America to the Messianic Cyrus, who had freed the Jews from their exile many centuries before. He is much more positive about America as a nation, contrasted by what *The Pentecostal Evangel* has been saying. Already in 1914, the *Evangel* directly addressed the belief that the United States would not be affected by the Great Tribulation by saying it will be as it is not an innocent nation<sup>110</sup>. In their view, the U.S. is not a chosen nation, rather, it is just like the other nations of the world. The explicit critique of the American government was not made as much during the years the government participated in the war. The focus lay on how individual Christians should behave during the war rather than what the government should do.

To conclude, the Assemblies saw World War I as a sign that the return of Jesus was imminent. They were critical of the role of the American government and, in general, argued for pacifism. Although they became more careful with this criticism after the U.S. joined the war.

### **View on the establishment of Israel**

After establishing how the Assemblies of God, USA described World War I and the role of the U.S. government in relation to their religious beliefs. Another political ideology should also be discussed. Christian Zionist narratives have previously been ignored in the academic work

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<sup>109</sup> Smith, *More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism*.

<sup>110</sup> Joseph Roswell. Flower, 'Editorials', *The Christian Evangel*, 10 October 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19141010-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

about AG during these years. Despite it being prevalent in many articles published in *The Pentecostal Evangel*. Christian Zionism, and modern Zionism in general, find their origins in the late nineteenth century<sup>111</sup>. The cause got mainstream support from the British government in November 1917 with the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration was a letter sent by British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild, an English Zionist. This letter stated that the British government was in favour of establishing a nation for the Jews in Palestine. During this time, the British were fighting the Ottoman Empire in the war. The Ottomans were the ones in charge in Palestine during this period. In December of 1917, the British won the Battle of Jerusalem, effectively taking control of the region. Which would end 31 years later in 1948 with Israel's declaration of independence.

Already on the 3rd of October 1914, the current war was discussed in light of what it could mean for a Jewish state. James Gray talks about the spiritual effects of the war on England. He is critical of the role of the English government but also talks about potential positive outcomes<sup>112</sup>.

Hence we expect from this war that England will come into closer union with the American Nation, and that these countries will become possessors of Constantinople and Palestine, and, at the proper time, with the Jews, take possession of the land given to Abraham in preparation for the day when Christ Himself shall reign in Jerusalem.<sup>113</sup>

A week later, an article is included that talks about what needs to happen before the return of Christ to earth<sup>114</sup>. It is mentioned how all the prophecies are coming true, such as Jewish people returning to Israel and being given more autonomy by the Turkish government. These sorts of comments

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<sup>111</sup> Donald M. Lewis, *A Short History of Christian Zionism*.

<sup>112</sup> James A. Gray, 'A Voice From England', *The Christian Evangel*, 3 October 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19141003-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>113</sup> Gray, 'A Voice From England'.

<sup>114</sup> J.S. Secrist, 'Jesus Is Coming Soon', *The Christian Evangel*, 10 October 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19141010-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

were further spurred on by the Ottoman Empire joining World War I at the end of November 1914.

On the 7th of November, Flower wrote: “Bible Students have been expecting for years that Turkey would be overthrown and Palestine released from her grasp”<sup>115</sup>. This hope and expectation that the war would help in the formation of an autonomous Jewish nation was reiterated in an edition of the magazine in March 1915<sup>116</sup>. Once more, in August of that same year, it is stated:

One of the principle reasons that we as Pentecostal people are interested in the present war, raging in Europe and Asia, is that it is closely connected with the return of the Jews to their beloved land, Palestine; and the final adjustment of the nations and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>117</sup>

In this article, it is mentioned that the Turkish people shall be driven out as the war goes on. However, they were not expecting a fully independent Jewish nation, but rather a protectorate under the Russians or British. It is also discussed how there are a few Zionist Jews who have the goal of restoring Israel, but momentum is increasing. As made evident by the first American Zionist gathering that took place in Boston that summer. At the beginning of the following year, an article was included in *The Pentecostal Evangel* by S.A. Jamieson about the imminence of Jesus’s Second Coming<sup>118</sup>. He is confident that his return will take place in the very near future, based on all eight signs from Matthew 24 coming true. One of these being wars and rumours of wars, as previously talked about. Another is that Jewish people are returning to Palestine, with

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<sup>115</sup> Joseph Roswell Flower, ‘The Kings of the East’, *The Christian Evangel*, 7 November 1914, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19141107-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>116</sup> ‘The Blessed Hope’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 27 March 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150327-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Preparation for the Return to Palestine’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 7 August 1915, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19150807-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>118</sup> S.A. Jamieson, ‘The Second Coming of Christ’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 26 February 1916, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19160226-01.1.6&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

God driving out the Ottomans to allow them to take control. This is a clear example of dispensational Zionism.

Later in 1916, an article by W.E. Blackstone was published in *The Pentecostal Evangel*<sup>119</sup>. W.E. Blackstone, as mentioned previously, was an influential person in the American Christian Zionist movement<sup>120</sup>. The article included was also sold as a tract by the Gospel Publishing House<sup>121</sup>. In the article itself, Blackstone explains how dispensational calculations of time work. He also discusses the importance of Jewish people's rule over the land. In his calculations, he finds that the most likely dates for the end of the Times of the Gentiles are 1915, 1926 and 1934 or 1916, 1927 and 1935<sup>122</sup>. He then argues:

As Israel lost the rule of their land at the beginning of these *Gentile times*, it would seem that the first terminal date would mark some kind of beginning of the restoration of the land. Does not this give great significance to the Zionist movement on the part of the Jews and to all that is now being said and done by Gentiles, to secure Palestine for the Jews, in the outcome of the present war?<sup>123</sup>

In August 1916, an article was included by Burt McCafferty from the *Jewish Advocate*<sup>124</sup>. This article is a news item about a response by Edward Gray, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the British Empire, to a question about Palestine. The person who asked the question talked about Palestine as a homeland for the Jews, and Gray said the Jewish interest would not be forgotten. In the previously talked about special second coming edition from April 1917, a short report was

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<sup>119</sup> W.E. Blackstone, 'The Times of the Gentiles', *The Weekly Evangel*, 13 May 1916, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19160513-01.1.6&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>120</sup> Donald M. Lewis, *A Short History of Christian Zionism*.

<sup>121</sup> Blackstone, 'The Times of the Gentiles'.

<sup>122</sup> Which set of years is true depends on which year one chooses for the capture of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>123</sup> Blackstone, 'The Times of the Gentiles', 7.

<sup>124</sup> Jewish Advocate, 'England Says Jews' Claims to Palestine Not Overlooked', *The Weekly Evangel*, 12 August 1916, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19160812-01.1.7&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

included from a Jewish conference in Winnipeg that was held recently<sup>125</sup>. They state that many different Jews came together, with varying opinions, but they unanimously passed a resolution which states that they would strive for an independent Jewish state in Palestine. The author, whose name is not included, calls the Jewish people the rightful owners of Palestine. In the same edition, a piece is included about how the times of the Gentiles are almost fulfilled<sup>126</sup>. This is because the British are fighting the Ottomans and it seems that they will conquer Jerusalem. This would fulfil the promise of the Jews being able to return to Palestine, which would mean the Second Coming is near. Once again, the return of the Jewish people to Palestine is linked to the Second Coming. As done consistently in *The Pentecostal Evangel*. In this scenario, the region would not be an independent Jewish state, rather, it would be under British rule. The link between the British fighting the Ottomans and being close to conquering Jerusalem and the Second Coming is made more than once. Albert Norton wrote the same in an article in October 1917<sup>127</sup>.

In December, an article was published that once more reminded the readers that the British are close to taking Jerusalem and that this year could be the last of the times of the Gentiles.<sup>128</sup> The Balfour Declaration is also mentioned as a great step forward for the Jewish cause. However, a year later in December 1918, it was established by E.N. Bell that Palestine needs to be under Jewish rule for the last dispensation to come to an end<sup>129</sup>. British rule would still count as gentile and thus the dispensation has not ended. Countering what others, like Frodsham and Jamieson, stated previously.

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<sup>125</sup> ‘Palestine for the Jews’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 10 April 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170410-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>126</sup> A.W. Frodsham, ‘Signs of the Time’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 10 April 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19170410-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>127</sup> Norton, ‘The Year 1917 in Prophecy’.

<sup>128</sup> ‘Palestine for the Jews’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 1 December 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19171201-01.1.4&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>129</sup> E.N. Bell, ‘Is It Too Late?’, *The Christian Evangel*, 28 December 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19181228-01.1.4&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

After the British invaded Jerusalem, a New York paper interviewed prominent Christian and Jewish leaders about what this would mean for the rest of the world and the church<sup>130</sup>. The Assemblies did not deem their answers satisfactory. They want to emphasise that this was prophesied by the Bible in Daniel. The gentile, non-Jewish rule of Jerusalem is ending. “Now we have the immediate prospect of the Gentile treading down of Jerusalem ending. That fact accomplished means that automatically the time of the Gentiles closes.”<sup>131</sup> In March 1918, a longer article is included about how God has a plan for the Jewish people that includes them returning to Palestine<sup>132</sup>. The author talks about how the Zionist movement grew and how more Jewish people are moving to Palestine. They claim that this is God’s prophecy coming true and that they will be waiting for Jesus to return. In August, a call for action is made to hold an international day of prayer<sup>133</sup>. The previous time this was done, it was a great success. It was done on October 6th and 7th of 1912, and in a series of effects<sup>134</sup> it led to the British conquering Jerusalem, “and the Zionists, the nucleus of a self-governing Jewish State was inaugurated in Jerusalem. Hallelujah!”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> A.W. F., ‘What It Means’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 22 December 1917, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19171222-01.1.3&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>131</sup> A.W. F., ‘What It Means’, 3.

<sup>132</sup> E.L. Langston, ‘The Chosen People and the Chosen Land’, *The Weekly Evangel*, 23 March 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19180323-01.1.2&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN--->.

<sup>133</sup> Max Wood Moorhead, E.N. Bell, and Stanley H. Frodsham, ‘An Appeal to the Pentecostal People Throughout the World to Observe Sunday, Nov. 3rd and Monday, Nov. 4, 1918 in United Prayer Inviting Jesus, Our Heavenly Bridegroom, to Come Back’, *The Christian Evangel*, 24 August 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19180824-01.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>134</sup> Wood Moorhead, Bell, and Frodsham, ‘An Appeal to the Pentecostal People’., as the article describes it, in short, on October 7th 1912, the First Balkan War would start, with the defeat of the Ottomans as the result. Following, the Second Balkan War would happen, which would be one of the causes of World War I. In World War I, the British would fight with the Ottomans and would take Jerusalem from them.

<sup>135</sup> Wood Moorhead, Bell, and Frodsham, ‘An Appeal to the Pentecostal People’, 1.

In an article in October, it is discussed what will happen to the Jews as they establish a Jewish nation<sup>136</sup>. Hubbell discusses how some of the Jews will be deceived by the Antichrist and will make him their Messiah. However, others will convert to Christianity. This is further argued with the use of different bible texts from Revelation. Specifically referring to, for example, Rev. 7: 1-8, where it says that 144.000 people will be sealed. 12.000 from each tribe of Israel. Hubbell takes this to mean 144.000 Jewish people who will be saved and not make the Antichrist their Messiah. Jewish people have a certain role to play in the end times, they will either be saved or worship the Antichrist. For the latter, they would be punished. This is anti-Semitic, as Perez put it: “This not only objectifies Jews but could even be construed as wishing harm for them”<sup>137</sup>. Christianity has a long history of anti-Semitism<sup>138</sup>. Rosemary Radford Ruether describes Christianity as seeing itself as universal, that nobody can be saved unless they are Christian, and everyone can become Christian. “This viewpoint does not take seriously the independent histories and identities of other peoples, in its own missionizing, much less accept these autonomous ways of salvation.”<sup>139</sup> As Hubbell says in the article, some Jews will convert and not follow the Antichrist<sup>140</sup>. However, this means that there is no way for the Jewish people to be saved whilst remaining Jewish.

It is interesting, however, that there is barely any mention of the role of the American government in the establishment of a Jewish state. This is different from what Robert Smith described about American protestants during this period<sup>141</sup>. He highlights William Blackstone as

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<sup>136</sup> E.S. Hubbell, ‘The Jew First’, *The Christian Evangel*, 19 October 1918, Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=PEV19181019-01.1.6&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->.

<sup>137</sup> Perez, ‘Christian Zionism’, 118.

<sup>138</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), <http://archive.org/details/faithfratricidet00ruet>.

<sup>139</sup> Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 238.

<sup>140</sup> Hubbell, ‘The Jew First’.

<sup>141</sup> Smith, *More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism*.

a key figure. Blackstone actively campaigned to different American presidents for their support of Zionism. America was chosen by God to help establish a Jewish nation and had an active role to play. In contrast, *The Pentecostal Evangel* does not mention what the American government should or should not do. Rather, they exclusively view what is happening in Palestine in light of prophecies. They are not actively campaigning in worldly politics for an independent Jewish nation. Perhaps, they do not feel the need to do so. God's plan for the Second Coming is in motion, and they are ready and waiting for it to come to fruition. What governments end up doing is all already decided by God. A Jewish nation will be established, whether or not the United States will be a part of it seems to be irrelevant. Their inaction can be further understood by Blumhofer's idea of citizenship, the fact that members of the Assemblies of God felt like they were members of a heavenly kingdom first, America second<sup>142</sup>. Although this was shifting, they might have felt less responsible for the actions of the American government as they did not see themselves as the ones being represented by it.

The language used to describe the people living in Palestine at the time should also be highlighted. "As God is working with the nations, He will drive the Turk out of Palestine"<sup>143</sup>, shows a disregard for the lives of the people living there. This disregard echoes through to today, where there is a lot of criticism of the Zionist movement based on how the Palestinian people are treated in Israel. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Palestinians have been expelled from their homes and have lived as second-class citizens<sup>144</sup>. This system is held in place by those who support the Israeli government, including Christian Zionists.

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<sup>142</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*.

<sup>143</sup> Jamieson, 'The Second Coming of Christ', 6.

<sup>144</sup> Anne Perez, 'Zionism in the State of Israel', in *Understanding Zionism*, History and Perspectives (Augsburg Fortress, 2023), 81–108, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2xkjxf4.7>.

To conclude, *The Evangel* consistently links the rise of modern Zionism to the imminent return of Christ. They see the Balfour Declaration and the Battle of Jerusalem as signs that the end is near. However, they do not discuss the role of the American government here, which, for example, William Blackstone, whose work they have published, saw as vital.

## Chapter Four: Conclusion

In this thesis, the magazine of the Assemblies of God, USA has been analysed. It looked at how they perceived their political reality in light of the imminent return of Jesus. Specifically, at World War I and the emerging modern Zionist movement. From the articles published in the magazine between 1914 and 1919, it can be deduced that the Great War was seen as a sign that Jesus would return soon. Despite this, members still struggled with the position the United States had within the war. The war was described as a punishment to the nations participating, including the U.S. There were calls for members to remain pacifists and become conscientious objectors to conscription. Although the need was felt to reiterate that the Assemblies were loyal to the government. This might have been because of the Espionage and Sedition Acts that were passed, which made obstructing the war effort illegal. After the war, the League of Nations was identified as something the Antichrist could emerge from. Something the U.S. would help with. This challenges ideas of American exceptionalism, the idea that Americans are a chosen people by God, with a special, positive role to play in the end times. The Assemblies seemingly did not feel the same way.

In the past, there has not been any research on the Assemblies of God, USA and the Zionist narratives that persist throughout their magazine. Movements by the British in the Ottoman Empire are also seen as a sign of the end times being near. Specifically, the Jews being able to return to Palestine. The British army's conquest of Jerusalem is celebrated. However, they do not see a special role for the American government in this process. At least they do not describe this in the magazine. This is different from other American protestants during the time.

This research is limited by what was published in *The Pentecostal Evangel*. There is no way to know what the exact intention was behind what was published. What was written can also

not be extrapolated to mean what every member thought at the time. Discussions were held within the magazine itself, so one can imagine the same would happen outside of the magazine. However, *The Pentecostal Evangel* is still a valuable resource as it does show what the Assemblies of God wanted to share with the world.

This thesis is just a start of the research that could and should be done on the Assemblies of God, USA. This thesis focused on a limited number of years, 1914-1919. However, more could be learned about Christian Zionist ideas within the Assemblies. There are 95 years of editions of *The Pentecostal Evangel* that this thesis has not covered. More could also be learned about the Assemblies of God outside of the USA, as it has massive communities in the global south. In general, these are topics that are under-researched despite the large number of people who are members of this denomination.

To conclude, during the World War I period, the Assemblies of God perceived the political reality of their time as a sign that the end was near. The war was a punishment to the nations for their sins, the League of Nations could bring forth the Antichrist, and the British conquering Jerusalem brought the world one step closer to a Jewish nation in Palestine. Whatever happened in the world had been predicted in the bible centuries ago and was coming true as they speak. According to *The Pentecostal Evangel*, everything pointed to Jesus coming back soon, so one must be ready.

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